

MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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Reminiscences of J. F. Funk

TIMOTHY BRENNEMAN

The writer's first remembrance of J. F. Funk is when he visited the family of (Elder) Daniel Brenneman (my father) in 1866, while he lived in Chicago and while we lived seven miles southwest of Elkhart, near Jamestown. I was but six years of age, but I remember him as a man of pleasing address, with a beautiful black beard. He was accompanied by a Bro. Neff, a Mennonite from Germany, but who lived in Chicago. This German Mennonite was an engraver and entertained us children by drawing pictures. It was in the fall of the year, and I remember I accompanied my father to the orchard where we gathered some choice topehockens, upon which our honorable guests might feast while the regular meal was being prepared. It was on this occasion my mother, as she afterward told me, advised Bro. Funk to come to Elkhart with his Herald of Truth printing outfit, which he did the following year. My mother's advice may at least have had an influence in the final decision to do so.

I well remember when he moved from Chicago to Elkhart, locating temporarily in the basement on North Main Street, while the building at 157 (old number) was being built, which he occupied in 1868. For a number of years the Herald office was a favorite resort for my father whenever he went to town. It was also an attractive place for us children on account of the beautiful picture and motto cards on display in the showcases. I have some of them in my possession even yet. Father was a frequent contributor to the columns of the Herald in those days. One day when Bro. Funk visited at our house, Father read to him a poem which he had just composed for the Herald. After listening to the reading he remarked: "You may become a poet yet if you keep on practicing."

I was present when Bro. Funk organized the first Mennonite Sunday school in Elkhart County, and which I think was the first in the State of Indiana, at the Shaum (now Olive) Church, seven miles southwest of Elkhart. It was not later than 1869 and may have been as early as 1868.

Abraham B. Holdeman was elected superintendent. I committed to memory many verses of scripture, such as the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the 23rd Psalm, etc., as a result of at-



Elder Daniel Brenneman, 1834-1919

Daniel Brenneman was born near Bremen, Fairfield County, Ohio, on June 8, 1834. As a youth he accepted Christ as his Saviour and was baptized on the confession of his faith and received as a member of the Mennonite Church. On

tending this school. The above-mentioned motto cards were much in evidence in this S. S. The school was closed for the winter season and I remember that many tears were shed as the various farewell addresses were delivered by the brethren. Bro. Funk was one of them and my Uncle H. B. Brenneman (Bro. Henry) was another. That school left a lasting and beneficial impression upon my life, and I am quite sure, also upon others. Bro. Funk took me into his home, as one of the family, in the year 1872, before I was 12 years of age. (I became 12 in the fall.) He took me into the printing office and taught me, with much patience, to set type. That summer I set most of the type on the Herald of Truth. I found him always kind and considerate towards me as well as his family. Even his reproof was in kindness, though stern. His wife at one time advised him with emphasis to desist in a certain thing which he proposed to do, to which he replied with a hearty laugh, "Ich bin mein eigener Boss" (I am my own Boss). I

March 22, 1857, he was married to Susannah Keagy of Augusta County, Virginia. To this union ten children were born: Mary, 1859; Timothy, 1860; John Samuel, 1862; Josiah, 1864; Rhoda, 1866; Martha, 1868; Susan, 1870; Daniel, 1873; Phoebe, 1875; and Mahlon, 1877. All of these children became members of the M.B.C. Church (now the United Missionary Church) except John who is Presbyterian, Daniel who is a Free Methodist minister and Mahlon, missionary of the Church Association. Phoebe, wife of Minister Calvin F. Snyder, was a missionary to China, 1904-41.

Daniel Brenneman always expected to be a minister. His father was a godly man who exerted a great and good influence upon him. In 1857 Daniel was chosen by lot and ordained to the ministry in the Mennonite Church in Fairfield County, Ohio. Seven years later, in 1864, Daniel Brenneman and family removed to Elkhart County, Indiana, settling among the Mennonites west of Goshen. He preached at Salem, Yellow Creek, Shaum's (Olive), and elsewhere, and was a vigorous speaker, a man of progressive views, one who preached in English. About ten years after locating in Elkhart County he found himself unable to remain with his denomination and he became a leader in what was later called the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church. He reached the ripe old age of eighty-five, dying on September 10, 1919. His body lies interred in the Oak Ridge (City) Cemetery, Goshen, Indiana.—W.

never heard him say a cross word to his wife or children. He practiced family worship, busy man as he was.

He was a man who believed in system and order in religious services as well as in business. At the Shaum (now Olive) Church, as in most Mennonite churches of that day, they had a long pulpit, and it was the practice of the janitor to place upon each end of this pulpit a pail of water, with tin cup, for the convenience of the parents with children. I remember, at the close of a service long about the year 1870, Bro. Funk took the opportunity of correcting a number of abuses that were being practiced by this congregation, one of which was that the pails of water should be placed in the rear of the church, which was ever after observed. Another practice condemned was that of spitting tobacco juice on the floor of the house of God. (Let us hope that the times of that ignorance God winked at.) A number of other practices were referred to, but I cannot recall them now.

One of the sad experiences in his life was when in 1874, the tie was severed between him and his dear brother and long time co-laborer Daniel Brenneman. Hitherto they had seen eye to eye and truer yokefellows had never existed. When the crisis arose in the church as to whether progressive methods, such as revival meetings and prayer meetings, should be introduced, the one was constrained to say NO and the other YES, although they had a few years previously (1872) conducted the first continued or revival meeting ever held in the Mennonite Church in the U.S.A. Funk had emphatic convictions that the time was not yet. Brenneman's convictions were just as strong that the hour had come. The writer well remembers a meeting called for the purpose of adjusting (if possible) the differences between Brenneman and a majority of his brethren. At one time during the meeting, while Brenneman was weeping bitter tears, Funk, with both hands in the pockets, paced the floor, and with all the language at his command, gave his reasons for deferring progressive methods.

Brenneman persisted that his convictions would not allow him to defer them any longer and the final result was that Brenneman was expelled from the church, and instead of the aforesaid fellowship, there seemed to be for a number of years a gulf fixed between these two brethren, which happily, in later years, was to a large extent removed, to their mutual gratification. This was evidenced by the fact that they frequently visited each other and participated together in public worship. As a final proof of this, Funk was called upon, when Brenneman died in 1919, to assist in the funeral services of the latter.

Bro. Funk had devoted the energies of the prime of his life in promoting and building up the Mennonite Publishing Co., and one of the greatest trials of his life was during those dark days when financial reverses forced the company into bankruptcy. While its affairs were being wound up, the writer expressed his sympathies to Bro. Funk, to which he replied, "Yes, this has been a great trial to me, but with the poet, I have prayed, 'The dearest idol of my heart, Whate'er that idol be, Help me to tear it from its throne, And worship only Thee.'"

And here let me state that the Mennonite people owe an obligation to Bro. Funk, in their travels from East to West and from West to East, as they stopped off at Elkhart to visit the Herald of Truth office.

In the kindness of his heart he generally invited them along and they seldom declined the honor of being a guest at his home. This added an additional burden to Sister Funk, and she deserves a large share of this obligation. It was seldom that a day passed without a guest in the home. Sister Funk very frequently sent me hurriedly to the meat market just before meal time.

Goshen, Indiana.

A Brief History of the Amish

(Continued from April Issue)

In spite of the separations and mergers just mentioned, the Old Order Amish still constitute the main line of the original Amish brotherhood. They now have one hundred and eighty-one congregations in the United States in seventeen states: thirty-seven congregations are in Pennsylvania, fifty-two in Ohio, forty-four in Indiana, eight in Illinois, and ten in Iowa. There are one hundred and fifty-two bishops, three hundred and ninety-four ministers, and one hundred and forty-five deacons serving these congregations. There are about 13,500 baptized members in Ontario and the United States or about 40,000 souls including children, and they constitute the fourth largest Mennonite body in America.¹⁴

The spirit of the Amish people is simple and friendly. Religious services are held every two weeks in private homes; during the summer months the services are sometimes held in barns. On alternate Sundays when there is no religious service a great deal of visiting is done among relatives and friends. Whenever a congregation becomes too large for accommodation in one home, the congregation is divided into districts of from twelve to twenty-five families. They have no general conference or district conferences, and Sunday schools are not common among them. The Bible is, in general, given a rather literal interpretation. The preaching is done in slightly modified High German while in the home and in the social circle the Amish use the Pennsylvania Dutch, a dialect composed of Palatine German together with a mixture of English words. Because Jesus plainly taught that His followers were to expect persecution, the Amish are not surprised when the society in which they live does not understand them. The hymnal used by the Amish is the *Anshund*, probably the oldest hymnbook still in use among Protestant churches. The collection of hymns had its origin in 1535 when a group of Anabaptists were thrown into a prison at Passau along the Danube River.¹⁵

The church offices in the Old Order Amish Church consist of three (1) the bishop (Voelliger Diener), who has charge of the major responsibilities, receiving applicants for baptism, conducting ceremonies, and exercising discipline; (2) the minister (Diener zum Buch), whose duties are to preach, read, and pray with the congregation; and (3) the deacon (Armen-Diener), who is responsible for ministering to the poor, and reconciling any difficulty which might occur between members of the church. A fourth office is Voelliger Armen Diener (a deacon ordained bishop); although in common usage in the past, this office is no longer in general practice.¹⁶

The Old Order Amish are not interested in what is generally known as evangelism. In their determination to retain the spirit of their forefathers they have lost almost completely the missionary

zeal which was so characteristic of the early Anabaptists.¹⁷ In this respect they differ from most Mennonite churches. Through the preaching of the Word and the influence of the home the young people become members of the church, but there is nothing corresponding to either home or foreign mission work in the Amish Church. "The Amish would not try to persuade one of another faith to become affiliated with their church. The only occasion there might be for the suggestion that some one leave another church and unite with theirs, would be in the case of the marriage of one of their members to some one belonging to another denomination. It is conceivable that in the course of the efforts to keep their brother or sister in the fold, they might recommend that the prospective bride or groom 'turn Amish.' Under any other circumstances such overtures would be considered out of place."¹⁸

Although the Old Order Amish have no organized missionary program as such, they are probably more missionary-minded than appears on the surface. Their acts of benevolence show that they are sensitive to the sufferings of other people and are generous contributors to relief causes. For the four-year period from 1944-47, they have donated more than one hundred and twenty-two thousand dollars toward foreign relief and refugee rehabilitation, through the Mennonite Central Committee. In addition, many of them have co-operated in community projects for the work of canning meat and gathering material supplies for relief purposes. They are doing "mission" work without knowing it. By the providence of God they have been led to America where they have multiplied and spread out into the valleys of the East and the prairies of the West. Here they built homes and established strong communities, and wherever they went they carried with them Gospel principles. Their mission in America as nonresistant Christians has been a curative mission—to bring healing to a human society and to witness to a higher life. The Amish would concur with Guy F. Hershberger, that there will always be more than enough people to perform the task of the magistracy, the police, and the military; but candidates for the higher place, which nonresistant Christians alone can fill, are altogether too few.¹⁹

Working and making a living are perhaps the two chief aims of the Amish in relation to material things. In order to make a success in life it is therefore not necessary to have a higher education; in fact, it may be a hindrance, because it is thought that schools often tend to make youngsters lazy and weaken them morally. After passing the eighth grade, young men and women remain at home where they receive the education and practical experience necessary for farming and homemaking. A young Amish farmer cannot become a farmer by reading books, but by hard work and practical experience with the soil. The Amish do not deny the value of education for

some people, but in general they feel that it is out of place for their boys and girls. Yet, in spite of their opposition to higher education, the Amish possess some very desirable virtues in their simple and plain way of living. They are hard-working, industrious, and prosperous, owning some of the best farms in their communities. It is obvious that their faith and nonconformed way of life can best express itself in the rural environment. In their closely knit intimate communities there is a genuine warmth of brotherhood, mutual respect, and trust.

But the Amish have their problems too. There is evidence here and there that it is increasingly difficult to maintain their distinctive way of life. Problems begin to mount up when the principles of their faith and the "old order" come into direct conflict with current issues and practices, as, for instance, in the area of farming methods, transportation, and communication. Spiritual disintegration has resulted in some communities with the result that religion is sometimes almost entirely a matter of form with little spiritual warmth. The church rules have been modified in some instances. Some congregations have made concessions on the matter of owning automobiles and tractors. New concessions and the appearance of "worldliness" are adding difficulty to their program of nonconformity, and the prospect of new changes disturbs the Amish leaders.

The Amish communities planted in this country are brotherhoods of the kind necessary in a Christian democracy. There is not an ideal of ecclesiastical or political hierarchy—to dictate to the common man what he must do, but a brotherhood where all members alike share in the family of God as brothers and sisters. Arthur E. Morgan, as well as other leading men of our nation, believes that the health of our civilization depends on the moral quality of the people living in small communities. He says, "The foundations of civilization are self-control, good will, neighborliness, mutual respect, open-mindedness, and cooperativeness. Where these qualities are strong a great civilization will grow. Where they become weak, no matter how great the wealth may be, nor how many cities and factories and universities there are, a civilization will break down . . . These qualities of neighborliness, good will, and mutual regard grow best in families and small communities where people know and trust each other, and are not afraid of acting in a civilized way. In big crowds and among strangers people tend to act in self-defense, and these finer traits do not have a good chance to develop . . ." ²⁰ If this is true, then the Amish communities are playing a very important part in the life of our nation. If the remedies for the ills of our nation are to be found in the small rural community, then these people are making a significant contribution to that end. In maintaining a live enthusiasm for the simple life of the country, they have warned our society against the dangers

of industrialism and the complexity of the city. The Amish challenge to the world is, that in our acceptance of the many changes and modern methods, we may be in danger of losing some of the foundation stones of our heritage.

¹⁴ The statistics in this paragraph are calculated from *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory* (Scottsdale, Pa.), 1948, Ellrose D. Zook, Ed.

¹⁵ The first edition was published in 1564, and the fourteenth American edition appeared in 1941. The hymns are heroic testimonies of fearless individuals who were about to be put to death. For a thorough discussion of the *Ausbund* see John Umble's article, "The Old Order Amish, Their Hymns and Hymn Tunes," published in *The Journal of American Folklore* (New York), Vol. 52, No. 203; January-March, 1939.

¹⁶ John Umble, "Amish Ordination Charges," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, October, 1939, 233-250. Using original documents formerly the property of Amish bishops two generations ago, John Umble has unearthed a valuable and interesting study of Amish ordination practices.

¹⁷ Not only did the Amish lose the missionary vision, but it was true also of the entire Mennonite brotherhood. The severe persecution of the sixteenth century almost annihilated the Anabaptists. When toleration finally came (1815) the Anabaptists had lost the vision of bringing the Gospel to all men. They eventually were content to be "die Stillen im Lande" (the quiet people of the country), and henceforth sought only to perpetuate their faith in their families. A revival of the missionary spirit began to manifest itself among the Mennonites during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and all but a few of the Mennonite branches are again missionary-minded.

¹⁸ Calvin George Bachman, *The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County* (Norristown, Pa.), 1942, 162.

¹⁹ Guy F. Hersherberger, *War, Peace, and Nonresistance* (Scottsdale), 1944, 301.

²⁰ A. E. Morgan, *The Des Moines Register* (Aug. 26, 1941), 8.

As quoted in Guy F. Hersherberger, *op. cit.*, 307.

SELECT READINGS

Bachman, Calvin George. *THE OLD ORDER AMISH OF LANCASTER COUNTY* (Norristown, Pa.), 1942. An authoritative history of the Amish with a good description of some of their beliefs and practices.

Bender, Harold S. *MENNONITE ORIGINS IN EUROPE*, No. 1 in the series, "Mennonites and Their Heritage" (Akron, Pa.), 1942. A 71-page pamphlet on the origin of the Mennonite Church.

Gascho, Milton. "Amish Division of 1693-1697 in Switzerland and Alsace," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, October, 1937, pp. 235-266.

Rice, Charles S. and Shenk, John B. *MEET THE AMISH*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1947. This book, a pictorial study, is an attempt to acquaint the general public with the Amish.

Smith, C. Henry. *THE MENNONITES OF AMERICA* (Scottsdale, 1909). Chapter VIII gives a general summary of the

early settlements in America with the developments of various conferences.

Smith, C. Henry. *MENNONITES IN AMERICA*, No. 11 in the series, "Mennonites and Their Heritage" (Akron, Pa.), 1942. This 72-page pamphlet is a brief discussion of all Mennonite groups in America with a short history of their settlement in this country.

Umble, John, an outstanding authority on the Amish, has written several very valuable articles which appear in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*: "Amish Ordination Charges," October, 1939, 233-250; "Amish Service Manuals," January, 1941, 26-32; and "Amish Minister's Manual" (ed.), April, 1941, 95-117.

Umble, John. "The Old Order Amish, Their Hymns and Hymn Tunes," in *Journal of American Folklore*, LII (January-March, 1939), 82-95.

Wenger, John Christian. *GLIMPSES OF MENNONITE HISTORY AND DOCTRINE* (Scottsdale, Pa.), 1947. For a brief general history of all the Anabaptist-Mennonite groups, this is one of the best and the most up-to-date work available.

Yoder, Joseph W. *ROSANNA OF THE AMISH* (Scottsdale, Pa.), 1940. A historical novel on Amish life and customs, thoroughly interesting.

Pilgram Marpeck's Summary of His Confession of Faith, c. 1532

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY
J. C. WENGER

Here are a number of articles, stated in brief for the sake of a better understanding, representing a summary of the following account of my faith and having the same content as the following writing from which they are excerpted:

1. First, that all sin, including the fall of Adam, consists in acquaintance with the knowledge of good and evil; where one knows nothing he has no sin.

2. That the fall of Adam was first annulled through the promise of God, given to Eve, just as original sin [is not taken into account?] prior to knowledge, and the serpent [Satan] comes according to the nature of the flesh. For flesh is not sin itself.

3. That the promise of God was the ground of the faith of [the saints of] the Old [Testament], which was first fulfilled in Christ, [who was] future [to them], and [the promise] had to wait [its fulfillment in] the Son of God.

4. That the faith of Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and all the others was not capable of producing true piety and forgiveness of sins, neither did they receive [piety and forgiveness] prior to the death and suffering of Christ. [Until then] they had to live in the faith of hope.

5. That they were all bound of sin, death, and hell until Christ [redeemed them]. And no one went to heaven before Christ, who first redeemed them through His blood.

6. God made His promises to all mankind, young and old, which was called a Testament of promise. Therefore both young and old were circumcised and were preserved, good and bad, for He was the God of them all.

7. That circumcision was given only to the children of Abraham, who according to the flesh were born of Abraham, as a seal of the Covenant which God had promised to his seed (including the "strangers" among them as their servants, who were also circumcised that the Covenant might not be regarded as impotent).

8. That only the children of the faith of Abraham are called the children of the Spirit, those who believed the promise God gave Abraham of the future redemption. These kept the commandments of God only from fear; they did not keep the law out of love for it. The reason is that the law was not yet inscribed in the heart; therefore it was wholly against them and not with them.

9. That the circumcision of the Spirit first began through the revelation of Christ, the Son of God who first bestowed all power. The Old [Testament saints] were merely in the volition of this circumcision, in the desire of the heart for the ability [to receive power from above]. Therefore their heart was circumcised but without [the reception of] ability.

10. The Son of God for the first time conferred power, and gives [it] to those who are His, (understand) to the believers mentioned above, who desire and hope for such [a gift], and who desire and hope to become children of God; that is, the spirit of free will and power received through Christ, in ability which is present and will be among all true believers in Christ.

11. That because of the reasons mentioned above, neither the outward nor the inner circumcision is comparable with the outward and inner baptism.

12. That circumcision and its law [are] not demanded of the man [who is] without ability; [this inability] consists of the will to do good without [being able] to do [it].

13. The baptism of water and the Spirit of Christ, of faith in Christ, demands nothing but love, and gives ability and deed to the will. He who does the will of the Father is a child of God.

14. The circumcision of the law brings with it, to him who believes that it is God's law and ordinance, the knowledge of sin, death, and hell, and the hope and comfort of being redeemed [or released] from it, which God had bound Himself to perform for them. This servile spirit the Old [Testament saints] had received of God.

15. The Gospel of Christ, and Christ Himself as the Redeemer, for whom the Old [Testament saints] hoped and whom they awaited with great long-suffering, brings with it to the one who believes and is baptized, redemption, cancellation

and forgiveness of sins; it takes away and banishes all fear and imprisonment [servitude], sin, death, and hell; it comforts and strengthens the brokenhearted and gives them power and might to do the will of God.

16. Those therefore who believe on Christ Jesus are made alive [and delivered] from all dead works, the law, and circumcision. For Christ accomplished the completion (of redemption) on the cross, and finished it, [namely] that which had been promised to Abraham.

17. So from now on faith can do and complete the pleasure of God. Sickness and death are gone; life and health are present. The salvation of all men is finished; the ignorance is excused. To the children and to all those of true simplicity the kingdom of God is given, etc.

18. The knowledge of good and evil [is] acquired through the preaching of the natural or divine law, in its inner application to the heart, which is bound by the preaching of the Gospel, [and brought] to the simplicity of faith in Christ. The truth gives testimony to itself. He who is baptized becomes like a child again, according to the order of Christ.

19. Therefore one cannot base infant baptism on circumcision as a figure. The reason is, circumcision accompanied the promise of God which in turn comprehended both young and old. Faith in Christ takes the understanding (as an enemy of God) captive and subjects it to the simplicity of faith. Where therefore the Spirit testifies, there also is baptism a testimony and a revelation in Christ.

20. When one is baptized in his youth, when worldly pride, crookedness, craftiness, and self-will are present (which shall be given up in baptism, through faith), he is then free from the Serpent and the craftiness [of the flesh]. These latter work in the realm of the mind and unconverted people are deceived into believing that they are already Christians—as one sees (God be merciful) in almost all those baptized as infants.

21. For he who believes and is baptized shall be saved. He who disbelieves is condemned. Where faith is absent all teaching is no teaching and baptism is no baptism.

22. Where children are baptized on the basis of the promise of Christ, one has insufficiently regarded His word, and is baptizing them merely with water, without the Spirit, who should be revealed [to the believing convert receiving baptism]. He who receives the witness of the water and the blood is, as a creature, received of the Creator (Christ), who indeed shall be the First-born.

23. God's covenant has indeed been extended to all men; for circumcision is a sign of the covenant and is not its witness, for God Himself was the Witness, and that is why both young and aged were circumcised.

24. Not all men make the covenant of a good conscience with God, but to those who do make it the water is the witness of a creature, as mankind indeed is but a creature. Therefore the command is to baptize only those who believe and who contract a covenant with God. This baptism is a witness of a good conscience with God.

25. Those therefore who believe and are baptized for the forgiveness and cancellation of sin, are children of God. These are children of God through faith; [on the other hand] children [infants] are children of God through the promise. [Both groups are] in the kingdom of Christ.

26. Such true believers are kept, governed, and led by the Spirit of God, without human help and aid. Those led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. He who is a fellow participant in the tribulation of Christ is also a fellow heir in the kingdom of Christ.

27. Such children of God in the kingdom of Christ have power. What they loose on earth is loosed and settled in heaven. What they bind on earth is bound in heaven. This "ban" is governed by the Holy Spirit, outwardly according to the nature of the love of God, and only in the Lord's Supper, when one observes the memorial of love. He who is without love and acts wholly against it, belongs without [the church]. Those who repent and are obedient in love in the Holy Spirit, eat and drink worthily from the table of the Lord, which is the blessing and thanksgiving of God.

28. Here there is no compulsion, but a spirit of free will in Christ Jesus our Lord. He who does not wish [to come to Christ and be baptized], let him remain without [the church]. He who wishes, let him come and drink freely and without cost.

29. No outward power may rule, govern, or profit in the kingdom of Christ.

That is a summary of the following presentation of my faith-testimony, which is here presented as a unit [not organized into numbered articles].

Sustaining Members, 1947

The following have by a gift of five dollars per year become sustaining members of Mennonite Historical Association for the year 1947:

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